

CLAIMS

1. An active telecommunications network comprising:
 - an active node (11) comprising active code reception means and an active code execution environment;
 - 5 and
 - a signaling control unit (3) comprising:
 - means for receiving a request (5) to set up a virtual circuit between a client terminal (1) and a server terminal (2);
 - 10 - virtual circuit set-up means; and
 - means controlled by the virtual circuit set-up means for sending active code to the active node.
2. A network according to claim 1, characterized in that
15 the signaling control unit further comprises:
 - an active code library; and
 - means for selecting active code in the library.
3. A network according to claim 2, characterized in that
20 the signaling control unit (3) further comprises active code compilation means.
4. A network according to any one of claims 1 to 3, characterized in that the signaling control unit (3)
25 further comprises means for generating active code on the fly.
5. A network according to any one of claims 1 to 4 adapted to use the Internet Protocol (IP).
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6. A signaling method for use in a telecommunications network according to any one of claims 1 to 5, comprising a step (8) of sending an appropriate active code from the signaling control unit (3) to the active node (11).
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7. A method according to claim 6, comprising a step prior to the sending step of deciding on a strategy for sending

of the appropriate active code by the signaling control unit.

5 8. A method according to claim 6 or claim 7, comprising a step prior to the sending step and optionally prior to the strategy decision step of the signaling control unit determining the appropriate active code.

10 9. A method according to claim 8, comprising a step prior to the determination step of negotiation between the terminals and the signaling control unit (3) of the characteristics of a communications session.

15 10. A method according to any one of claims 6 to 9, comprising a step prior to the negotiation step of the signaling control unit receiving the virtual circuit request (5) and setting up the virtual circuit.

20 11. A method according to claim 8, wherein, when the control unit (3) comprises the active code library and selection means, the determination step comprises the selection by the control unit (3) of the appropriate active code in the library.

25 12. A method according to claim 8, wherein, when the control unit (3) comprises active code generation means, the determination step comprises the generation of the appropriate active code on the fly by the control unit (3).